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The Teaching of Sri Aurobindo

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Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face.

— Sri Aurobindo

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The Teaching of Sri Aurobindo and The One Aim of His Yoga

Selections from the Writings of Sri Aurobindo

The one aim of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga is an inner self-development by which each one who follows it can in time discover the One Self in all and evolve a higher consciousness than the mental, – a spiritual and supramental consciousness which will transform and divinise human nature.

To arrive at some mental conception about God and ourselves and the world is an object good for the intellect but not large enough for the Spirit; it will not make us the conscious sons of Infinity.

Ancient Indian thought meant by knowledge a consciousness which possesses the highest Truth in a direct perception and in self-experience; to become, to be the Highest that we know is the sign that we really have the knowledge. For the same reason, to shape our practical life, our actions as far as may be in consonance with our intellectual notions of truth and right or with a successful pragmatic knowledge, – an ethical or a vital fulfilment, – is not and cannot be the ultimate aim of our life; our aim must be to grow into our true being, our being of Spirit, the being of the supreme and universal Existence, Consciousness, Delight, Sachchidananda.

C O N T E N T S

Selections from the Writings of Sri Aurobindo

- 03 The Teaching of Sri Aurobindo
- 05 The Triple Way of Knowledge, Works and Love
- 22 Principle of the Integral Yoga
- 27 The Integral Yoga – Its Object and Method
- 30 True Object of Life – Integral Divine Perfection
- 33 Supermind and the Life Divine
- 34 The Triple Transformation
- 40 Conditions for the Coming of a Spiritual Age
- 47 Rose of God (Poem)
- 48 A Call

The Teaching of Sri Aurobindo

Men are divided by separativity of consciousness by degree of ignorance about their true self
mind, life and body
spiritual and supramental

The teaching of Sri Aurobindo¹ starts from that of the ancient sages of India that behind the appearances of the universe there is the Reality of a Being and Consciousness, a Self of all things, one and eternal. All beings are united in that One Self and Spirit but divided by a certain separativity of consciousness, an ignorance of their true Self and Reality in the mind, life and body. It is possible by a certain psychological discipline to remove this veil of separative consciousness and become aware of the true Self, the Divinity within us and all.

Sri Aurobindo's teaching states that this One Being and Consciousness is involved here in Matter. Evolution is the method by which it liberates itself; consciousness appears in what seems to be inconscient, and once having appeared is self-impelled to grow higher and higher and at the same time to enlarge and develop towards a greater and greater perfection. Life is the first step of this release of consciousness; mind is the second; but the evolution does not finish with mind, it awaits a release into something greater, a consciousness which is spiritual and supramental. The next step of the evolution must be towards the development of Supermind and Spirit as the dominant power in the conscious being. For only then will the involved Divinity in things release itself entirely and it become possible for life to manifest perfection.

greatest
But while the former steps in evolution were taken by Nature without a conscious will in the plant and animal life, in man Nature becomes able to evolve by a conscious will in the instrument. It is not, however, by the mental will in man that this can be wholly done, for the mind goes only to a certain point and after that can only move in a circle. A conversion has to be made, a turning of the consciousness by which mind has to change into the higher principle. This method is to be found through the ancient psychological discipline and practice of Yoga. In the past, it has been attempted by a drawing away from the world and a disappearance into the height of the Self or Spirit. Sri Aurobindo teaches that a descent of the higher principle is possible which will not merely release the spiritual Self out of the world, but release it in the world, replace the mind's ignorance or its very limited knowledge by a supramental Truth-Consciousness which will be a sufficient instrument of the inner Self and make it possible for the human being to find himself dynamically as well as inwardly and grow out of his still animal humanity into a diviner race. The psychological discipline of Yoga can be used to that end by opening all the parts of the being to a conversion or transformation through the descent and working of the higher still concealed supramental principle.

This, however, cannot be done at once or in a short time or by any rapid or miraculous transformation. Many steps have to be taken by the seeker before the supramental descent is possible. Man lives mostly in his surface mind, life and body,

¹ In this statement Sri Aurobindo speaks of himself in the third person.

but there is an inner being within him with greater possibilities to which he has to awake – for it is only a very restricted influence from it that he receives now and that pushes him to a constant pursuit of a greater beauty, harmony, power and knowledge. The first process of Yoga is therefore to open the ranges of this inner being and to live from there outward, governing his outward life by an inner light and force. In doing so he discovers in himself his true soul which is not this outer mixture of mental, vital and physical elements but something of the Reality behind them, a spark from the one Divine Fire. He has to learn to live in his soul and purify and orientate by its drive towards the Truth the rest of the nature. There can follow afterwards an opening upward and descent of a higher principle of the Being. But even then it is not at once the full supramental Light and Force. For there are several ranges of consciousness between the ordinary human mind and the supramental Truth-Consciousness. These intervening ranges have to be opened up and their power brought down into the mind, life and body. Only afterwards can the full power of the Truth-Consciousness work in the nature. The process of this self-discipline or Sadhana is therefore long and difficult, but even a little of it is so much gained because it makes the ultimate release and perfection more possible.

There are many things belonging to older systems that are necessary on the way – an opening of the mind to a greater wideness and to the sense of the Self and the Infinite, an emergence into what has been called the cosmic consciousness, mastery over the desires and passions; an outward asceticism is not essential, but the conquest of desire and attachment and a control over the body and its needs, greeds and instincts are indispensable. There is a combination of the principles of the old systems, the way of knowledge through the mind's discernment between Reality and the appearance, the heart's way of devotion, love and surrender and the way of works turning the will away from motives of self-interest to the Truth and the service of a greater Reality than the ego. For the whole being has to be trained so that it can respond and be transformed when it is possible for that greater Light and Force to work in the nature.

In this discipline, the inspiration of the Master, and in the difficult stages his control and his presence are indispensable – for it would be impossible otherwise to go through it without much stumbling and error which would prevent all chance of success. The Master is one who has risen to a higher consciousness and being and he is often regarded as its manifestation or representative. He not only helps by his teaching and still more by his influence and example but by a power to communicate his own experience to others.

This is Sri Aurobindo's teaching and method of practice. It is not his object to develop any one religion or to amalgamate the older religions or to found any new religion – for any of these things would lead away from his central purpose. The one aim of his Yoga is an inner self-development by which each one who follows it can in time discover the One Self in all and evolve a higher consciousness than the mental, – a spiritual and supramental consciousness which will transform and divinise human nature.

(August, 1934)

The Triple Way of Knowledge, Works and Love

(The Message of the Gita)

self finding, self fulfilment, self realisation

“The secret of action,” so we might summarise the message of the Gita, the word of its divine Teacher, “is one with the secret of all life and existence. Existence is not merely a machinery of Nature, a wheel of law in which the soul is entangled for a moment or for ages; it is a constant manifestation of the Spirit. Life is not for the sake of life alone, but for God, and the living soul of man is an eternal portion of the Godhead. Action is for self-finding, for self-fulfilment, for self-realisation and not only for its own external and apparent fruits of the moment or the future. There is an inner law and meaning of all things dependent on the supreme as well as the manifested nature of the self; the true truth of works lies there and can be represented only incidentally, imperfectly and disguised by ignorance in the outer appearances of the mind and its action. The supreme, the faultless largest law of action is therefore to find out the truth of your own highest and inmost existence and live in it and not to follow any outer standard and dharma. All life and action must be till then an imperfection, a difficulty, a struggle and a problem. It is only by discovering your true self and living according to its true truth, its real reality that the problem can be finally solved, the difficulty and struggle overpassed and your doings perfected in the security of the discovered self and spirit turn into a divinely authentic action. Know then your self; know your true self to be God and one with the self of all others; know your soul to be a portion of God. Live in what you know; live in the self, live in your supreme spiritual nature, be united with God and Godlike. Offer, first, all your actions as a sacrifice to the Highest and the One in you and to the Highest and the One in the world; deliver last all you are and do into his hands for the supreme and universal Spirit to do through you his own will and works in the world. This is the solution that I present to you and in the end you will find that there is no other.”

Here it is necessary to state the Gita's view of the fundamental opposition on which like all Indian teaching it takes its position. This finding of the true self, this knowledge of the Godhead within us and all is not an easy thing; nor is it an easy thing either to turn this knowledge, even though seen by the mind, into the stuff of our consciousness and the whole condition of our action. All action is determined by the effective state of our being, and the effective state of our being is determined by the state of our constant self-seeing will and active consciousness and by its basis of kinetic movement. It is what we see and believe with our whole active nature ourselves to be and our relations with the world to mean, it is our faith, our *śraddhā*, that makes us what we are. But the consciousness of man is of a double kind and corresponds to a double truth of existence; for there is a truth of the inner reality and a truth of the outer appearance. According as he lives in one or the other, he will be a mind dwelling in human ignorance or a soul founded in divine knowledge.

In its outer appearance the truth of existence is solely what we call Nature or Prakriti, a Force that operates as the whole law and mechanism of being, creates the world which is the object of our mind and senses and creates too the mind and senses as a means of relation between the creature and the objective world in which he lives. In this outer appearance man in his soul, his mind, his life, his body seems to be a creature of Nature differentiated from others by a separation of his body, life and mind and especially by his ego-sense – that subtle mechanism constructed for him that he may confirm and centralise his consciousness of all this strong separateness and difference. All in him, his soul of mind and its action as well as the functioning of his life and body, is very evidently determined by the law of his nature, cannot get outside of it, cannot operate otherwise. He attributes indeed a certain freedom to his personal will, the will of his ego; but that in reality amounts to nothing, since his ego is only a sense which makes him identify himself with the creation that Nature has made of him, with the varying mind and life and body she has constructed. His ego is itself a product of her workings, and as is the nature of his ego, so will be the nature of its will and according to that he must act and he can no other.

This then is man's ordinary consciousness of himself, this his faith in his own being, that he is a creature of Nature, a separate ego establishing whatever relations with others and with the world, making whatever development of himself, satisfying whatever will, desire, idea of his mind may be permissible in her circle and consonant with her intention or law in his existence.

There is, however, something in man's consciousness which does not fall in with the rigidity of this formula; he has a faith, which grows greater as his soul develops, in another and an inner reality of existence. In this inner reality the truth of existence is no longer Nature but Soul and Spirit, Purusha rather than Prakriti. Nature herself is only a power of Spirit, Prakriti the force of the Purusha. A Spirit, a Self, a Being one in all is the master of this world which is only his partial manifestation. That Spirit is the upholder of Nature and her action and the giver of the sanction by which alone her law becomes imperative and her force and its ways operative. That Spirit within her is the Knower who illuminates her and makes her conscient in us; his is the immanent and superconscient Will that inspires and motives her workings. The soul in man, a portion of this Divinity, shares his nature. Our nature is our soul's manifestation, operates by its sanction and embodies its secret self-knowledge and self-consciousness and its will of being in her motions and forms and changes.

The real soul and self of us is hidden from our intelligence by its ignorance of inner things, by a false identification, by an absorption in our outward mechanism of mind, life and body. But if the active soul of man can once draw back from this identification with its natural instruments, if it can see and live in the entire faith of its inner reality, then all is changed to it, life and existence take on another appearance,

action a different meaning and character. Our being then becomes no longer this little egoistic creation of Nature, but the largeness of a divine, immortal and spiritual Power. Our consciousness becomes no longer that of this limited and struggling mental and vital creature, but an infinite, divine and spiritual consciousness. And our will and action too are no longer that of this bounded personality and its ego, but a divine and spiritual will and action, the will and power of the Universal, the Supreme, the All-Self and Spirit acting freely through the human figure.

"This is the great change and transfiguration," runs the message of the Godhead in man, the Avatar, the divine Teacher, "to which I call the elect, and the elect are all who can turn their will away from the ignorance of the natural instruments to the soul's deepest experience, its knowledge of the inner self and spirit, its contact with the Godhead, its power to enter into the Divine. The elect are all who can accept this faith and this greater law. It is difficult indeed to accept for the human intellect attached always to its own cloud-forms and half-lights of ignorance and to the yet obscurer habits of man's mental, nervous and physical parts; but once received it is a great and sure and saving way, because it is identical with the true truth of man's being and it is the authentic movement of his inmost and supreme nature.

"But the change is a very great one, an enormous transformation, and it cannot be done without an entire turning and conversion of your whole being and nature. There will be needed a complete consecration of your self and your nature and your life to the Highest and to nothing else but the Highest; for all must be held only for the sake of the Highest, nothing accepted except as it is in God and a form of God and for the sake of the Divine. There will be needed an admission of new truth, an entire turn and giving of your mind to a new knowledge of self and others and world and God and soul and Nature, a knowledge of oneness, a knowledge of universal Divinity, which will be at first an acceptance by the understanding but must become in the end a vision, a consciousness, a permanent state of the soul and frame of its movements.

"There will be needed a will that shall make this new knowledge, vision, consciousness a motive of action and the sole motive. And it must be the motive not of an action grudging, limited, confined to a few necessary operations of Nature or to the few things that seem helpful to a formal perfection, apposite to a religious turn or to an individual salvation, but rather all action of human life taken up by the equal spirit and done for the sake of God and the good of all creatures. There will be needed an uplifting of the heart in a single aspiration to the Highest, a single love of the Divine Being, a single God-adoration. And there must be a widening too of the calmed and enlightened heart to embrace God in all beings. There will be needed a change of the habitual and normal nature of man as he is now to a supreme and divine spiritual nature. There will be needed in a word a Yoga which shall be at once a Yoga of integral knowledge, a Yoga of the integral will and its

works, a Yoga of integral love, adoration and devotion and a Yoga of an integral spiritual perfection of the whole being and of all its parts and states and powers and motions.

“What then is this knowledge that will have to be admitted by the understanding, supported by the soul’s faith and made real and living to the mind, heart and life? It is the knowledge of the supreme Soul and Spirit in its oneness and its wholeness. It is the knowledge of One who is for ever, beyond Time and Space and name and form and world, high beyond his own personal and impersonal levels and yet from whom all this proceeds, One whom all manifests in manifold Nature and her multitude of figures. It is the knowledge of him as an impersonal eternal immutable Spirit, the calm and limitless thing we call Self, infinite, equal and always the same, unaffected and unmodified and unchanged amid all this constant changing and all this multitude of individual personalities and soul powers and Nature powers and the forms and forces and eventualities of this transitory and apparent existence. It is the knowledge of him at the same time as the Spirit and Power who seems ever mutable in Nature, the Inhabitant who shapes himself to every form and modifies himself to every grade and degree and activity of his power, the Spirit who, becoming all that is even while he is for ever infinitely more than all that is, dwells in man and animal and thing, subject and object, soul and mind and life and matter, every existence and every force and every creature.

“It is not by insisting on this or that side only of the truth that you can practise this Yoga. The Divine whom you have to seek, the Self whom you have to discover, the supreme Soul of whom your soul is an eternal portion, is simultaneously all these things; you have to know them simultaneously in a supreme oneness, enter into all of them at once and in all states and all things see Him alone. If he were solely the Spirit mutable in Nature, there would be only an eternal and universal becoming. If you limit your faith and knowledge to that one aspect, you will never go beyond your personality and its constant changeable figures; on such a foundation you would be bound altogether in the revolutions of Nature. But you are not merely a succession of soul moments in Time. There is an impersonal self in you which supports the stream of your personality and is one with God’s vast and impersonal spirit. And incalculable beyond this impersonality and personality, dominating these two constant poles of what you are here, you are eternal and transcendent in the Eternal Transcendence.

“If, again, there were only the truth of an eternal impersonal self that neither acts nor creates, then the world and your soul would be illusions without any real basis. If you limit your faith and knowledge to this one lonely aspect, the renunciation of life and action is your only resource. But God in the world and you in the world are realities; the world and you are true and actual powers and manifestations of the Supreme. Therefore accept life and action and do not reject them. One with God in your impersonal self and essence, an eternal portion of the

Godhead turned to him by the love and adoration of your spiritual personality for its own Infinite, make of your natural being what it is intended to be, an instrument of works, a channel, a power of the Divine. That it always is in its truth, but now unconsciously and imperfectly, through the lower nature, doomed to a disfigurement of the Godhead by your ego. Make it consciously and perfectly and without any distortion by ego a power of the Divine in his supreme spiritual nature and a vehicle of his will and his works. In this way you will live in the integral truth of your own being and you will possess the integral God-union, the whole and flawless Yoga.

“The Supreme is the Purushottama, eternal beyond all manifestation, infinite beyond all limitation by Time or Space or Causality or any of his numberless qualities and features. But this does not mean that in his supreme eternity he is unconnected with all that happens here, cut off from world and Nature, aloof from all these beings. He is the supreme ineffable Brahman, he is impersonal self, he is all personal existences. Spirit here and life and matter, soul and Nature and the works of Nature are aspects and movements of his infinite and eternal existence. He is the supreme transcendent Spirit and all comes into manifestation from him and are his forms and his self-powers. As the one self he is here all-pervasive and equal and impersonal in man and animal and thing and object and every force of Nature. He is the supreme Soul and all souls are tireless flames of this one Soul. All living beings are in their spiritual personality deathless portions of the one Person or Purusha. He is the eternal Master of all manifested existence, Lord of the worlds and their creatures. He is the omnipotent originator of all actions, not bound by his works, and to him go all action and effort and sacrifice. He is in all and all are in him; he has become all and yet too he is above all and not limited by his creations. He is the transcendent Divine; he descends as the Avatar; he is manifest by his power in the Vibhuti; he is the Godhead secret in every human being. All the gods whom men worship are only personalities and forms and names and mental bodies of the one Divine Existence.

“The Supreme has manifested the world from his spiritual essence and in his own infinite existence and manifested himself too variously in the world. All things are his powers and figures and to the powers and figures of him there is no end, because he himself is infinite. As a pervading and containing impersonal self-existence he informs and sustains equally and without any partiality, preference or attachment to any person or thing or happening or feature all this infinite manifestation in Time and the universe. This pure and equal Self does not act, but supports impartially all the action of things. And yet it is the Supreme, but as the cosmic Spirit and the Time Spirit, who wills and conducts and determines the action of the world through his multitudinous power-to-be, that power of the Spirit which we call Nature. He creates, sustains and destroys his creations. He is seated too in the heart of every living creature and from there as a secret Power in the individual, no less than from his universal presence in the cosmos, he originates by force of

Nature, manifests some line of his mystery in quality of nature and in executive energy of nature, shapes each thing and being separately according to its kind and initiates and upholds all action. It is this transcendent first origination from the Supreme and this constant universal and individual manifestation of Him in things and beings which makes the complex character of the cosmos.

“There are always these three eternal states of the Divine Being. There is always and for ever this one eternal immutable self-existence which is the basis and support of existent things. There is always and for ever this Spirit mutable in Nature manifested by her as all these existences. There is always and forever this transcendent Divine who can be both of these others at once, can be a pure and silent Spirit and at the same time the active soul and life of the cycles of the universe, because he is something other and more than these two whether taken separately or together. In us is the Jiva, a spirit of this Spirit, a conscious power of the Supreme. He is one who carries in his deepest self the whole of the immanent Divine and in Nature lives in the universal Divine, – no temporary creation but an eternal soul acting and moving in the eternal Self, in the eternal Infinite.

“This conscient soul in us can adopt either of these three states of the Spirit. Man can live here in the mutability of Nature and in that alone. Ignorant of his real self, ignorant of the Godhead within him, he knows only Nature: he sees her as a mechanical executive and creative Force and sees himself and others as her creations, – egos, separated existences in her universe. It is thus, superficially, that he now lives and, while it is so and until he exceeds this outer consciousness and knows what is within him, all his thought and science can only be a shadow of light thrown upon screens and surfaces. This ignorance is possible, is even imposed, because the Godhead within is hidden by the veil of his own power. His greater reality is lost to our view by the completeness with which he has identified himself in a partial appearance with his creations and images and absorbed the created mind in the deceptive workings of his own Nature. And it is possible also because the real, the eternal, the spiritual Nature which is the secret of things in themselves is not manifest in their outward phenomena. The Nature which we see when we look outwards, the Nature which acts in our mind and body and senses is a lower Force, a derivation, a Magician who creates figures of the Spirit but hides the Spirit in its figures, conceals the truth and makes men look upon masks, a Force which is only capable of a sum of secondary and depressed values, not of the full power and glory and ecstasy and sweetness of the manifestation of the Divine. This Nature in us is a Maya of the ego, a tangle of the dualities, a web of ignorance and the three gunas. And so long as the soul of man lives in the surface fact of mind and life and body and not in his self and spirit, he cannot see God and himself and the world as they really are, cannot overcome this Maya, but must do what he can with its terms and figures.

“It is possible by drawing back from the lower turn of his nature in which man

now lives, to awake from this light that is darkness and live in the luminous truth of the eternal and immutable self-existence. Man then is no longer bound up in his narrow prison of personality, no longer sees himself as this little I that thinks and acts and feels and struggles and labours for a little. He is merged in the vast and free impersonality of the pure spirit; he becomes the Brahman; he knows himself as one with the one self in all things. He is no longer aware of ego, no longer troubled by the dualities, no longer feels anguish of grief or disturbance of joy, is no longer shaken by desire, is no longer troubled by sin or limited by virtue. Or if the shadows of these things remain, he sees and knows them only as Nature working in her own qualities and does not feel them to be the truth of himself in which he lives. Nature alone acts and works out her mechanical figures: but the pure spirit is silent, inactive and free. Calm, untouched by her workings, it regards them with a perfect equality and knows itself to be other than these things. This spiritual state brings with it a still peace and freedom but not the dynamic divinity, not the integral perfection; it is a great step, but it is not the integral God-knowledge and self-knowledge.

“A perfect perfection comes only by living in the supreme and the whole Divine. Then the soul of man is united with the Godhead of which it is a portion; then it is one with all beings in the self and spirit, one with them both in God and in Nature; then it is not only free but complete, plunged in the supreme felicity, ready for its ultimate perfection. He still sees the self as an eternal and changeless Spirit silently supporting all things; but he sees also Nature no longer as a mere mechanical force that works out things according to the mechanism of the gunas, but as a power of the Spirit and the force of God in manifestation. He sees that the lower Nature is not the inmost truth of the spirit's action; he becomes aware of a highest spiritual nature of the Divine in which is contained the source and the yet to be realised greater truth of all that is imperfectly figured now in mind, life and body. Arisen from the lower mental to this supreme spiritual nature he is delivered there from all ego. He knows himself as a spiritual being, in his essence one with all existences and in his active nature a power of the one Godhead and an eternal soul of the transcendent Infinite. He sees all in God and God in all; he sees all things as Vasudeva. He is delivered from the dualities of joy and grief, from the pleasant and the unpleasant, from desire and disappointment, from sin and virtue. All henceforth is to his conscious sight and sense the will and working of the Divine. He lives and acts as a soul and portion of the universal consciousness and power; he is filled with the transcendent divine delight, a spiritual Ananda. His action becomes the divine action and his status the highest spiritual status.

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“This is the solution, this the salvation, this the perfection that I offer to all those who can listen to a divine voice within them and are capable of this faith and knowledge. But to climb to this pre-eminent condition the first necessity, the original radical step is to turn away from all that belongs to your lower Nature and fix

yourself by concentration of the will and intelligence on that which is higher than either will or intelligence, higher than mind and heart and sense and body. And first of all you must turn to your own eternal and immutable self, impersonal and the same in all creatures. So long as you live in ego and mental personality, you will always spin endlessly in the same rounds and there can be no real issue. Turn your will inward beyond the heart and its desires and the sense and its attractions; lift it upward beyond the mind and its associations and attachments and its bounded wish and thought and impulse. Arrive at something within you that is eternal, ever unchanged, calm, unperturbed, equal, impartial to all things and persons and happenings, not affected by any action, not altered by the figures of Nature. Be that, be the eternal self, be the Brahman. If you can become that by a permanent spiritual experience, you will have an assured basis on which you can stand delivered from the limitations of your mind-created personality, secure against any fall from peace and knowledge, free from ego.

“Thus to impersonalise your being is not possible so long as you nurse and cherish and cling to your ego or anything that belongs to it. Desire and the passions that arise from desire are the principal sign and knot of ego. It is desire that makes you go on saying I and mine and subjects you through a persistent egoism to satisfaction and dissatisfaction, liking and disliking, hope and despair, joy and grief, to your petty loves and hatreds, to wrath and passion, to your attachment to success and things pleasant and to the sorrow and suffering of failure and of things unpleasant. Desire brings always confusion of mind and limitation of the will, an egoistic and distorted view of things, a failure and clouding of knowledge. Desire and its preferences and violences are the first strong root of sin and error. There can be while you cherish desire no assured stainless tranquillity, no settled light, no calm pure knowledge. There can be no right being – for desire is a perversion of the spirit – and no firm foundation for right thought, action and feeling. Desire, if permitted to remain under whatever colour, is a perpetual menace even to the wisest and can at any moment subtly or violently cast down the mind from even its firmest and most surely acquired foundation. Desire is the chief enemy of spiritual perfection.

“Slay then desire; put away attachment to the possession and enjoyment of the outwardness of things. Separate yourself from all that comes to you as outward touches and solicitations, as objects of the mind and senses. Learn to bear and reject all the rush of the passions and to remain securely seated in your inner self even while they rage in your members, until at last they cease to affect any part of your nature. Bear and put away similarly the forceful attacks and even the slightest insinuating touches of joy and sorrow. Cast away liking and disliking, destroy preference and hatred, root out shrinking and repugnance. Let there be a calm indifference to these things and to all the objects of desire in all your nature. Look on them with the silent and tranquil regard of an impersonal spirit.

“The result will be an absolute equality and the power of unshakable calm that

the universal spirit maintains in front of its creations, facing ever the manifold action of Nature. Look with equal eyes; receive with an equal heart and mind all that comes to you, success and failure, honour and dishonour, the esteem and love of men and their scorn and persecution and hatred, every happening that would be to others a cause of joy and every happening that would be to others a cause of sorrow. Look with equal eyes on all persons, on the good and the wicked, on the wise and the foolish, on the Brahmin and the outcaste, on man at his highest and every pettiest creature. Meet equally all men whatever their relations to you, friend and ally, neutral and indifferent, opponent and enemy, lover and hater. These things touch the ego and you are called to be free from ego. These are personal relations and you have to observe all with the deep regard of the impersonal spirit. These are temporal and personal differences which you have to see but not be influenced by them; for you must fix not on these differences but on that which is the same in all, on the one self which all are, on the Divine in every creature and on the one working of Nature which is the equal will of God in men and things and energies and happenings and in all endeavour and result and whatever outcome of the world's labour.

“Action will still be done in you because Nature is always at work; but you must learn and feel that your self is not the doer of the action. Observe simply, observe unmoved the working of Nature and the play of her qualities and the magic of the gunas. Observe unmoved this action in yourself; look on all that is being done around you and see that it is the same working in others. Observe that the result of your works and theirs is constantly other than you or they desired or intended, not theirs, not yours, but omnipotently fixed by a greater Power that wills and acts here in universal Nature. Observe too that even the will in your works is not yours but Nature's. It is the will of the ego sense in you and is determined by the predominant quality in your composition which she has developed in the past or else brings forward at the moment. It depends on the play of your natural personality and that formation of Nature is not your true person. Draw back from this external formation to your inner silent self; you will see that you the Purusha are inactive, but Nature continues to do always her works according to her gunas. Fix yourself in this inner inactivity and stillness: no longer regard yourself as the doer. Remain seated in yourself above the play, free from the perturbed action of the gunas. Live secure in the purity of an impersonal spirit, live untroubled by the mortal waves that persist in your members.

“If you can do this, then you will find yourself uplifted into a great release, a wide freedom and a deep peace. Then you will be aware of God and immortal, possessed of your dateless self-existence, independent of mind and life and body, sure of your spiritual being, untouched by the reactions of Nature, unstained by passion and sin and pain and sorrow. Then you will depend for your joy and desire on no mortal or outward or worldly thing, but will possess inalienably the self-sufficient delight of a calm and eternal spirit. Then you will have ceased to be a

mental creature and will have become spirit illimitable, the Brahman. And into this eternity of the silent self, rejecting from your mind all seed of thought and all root of desire, rejecting the figure of birth in the body, you can pass at your end by concentration in the pure Eternal and a mighty transference of your consciousness to the infinite, the Absolute.

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“This however is not all the truth of the Yoga and this end and way of departure, though a great end and a great way, is not the thing I propose to you. For I am the eternal Worker within you and I ask of you works. I demand of you not a passive consent to a mechanical movement of Nature from which in your self you are wholly separated, indifferent and aloof, but action complete and divine, done as the willing and understanding instrument of the Divine, done for God in you and others and for the good of the world. This action I propose to you, first no doubt as a means of perfection in the supreme spiritual Nature, but as a part too of that perfection. Action is part of the integral knowledge of God and of his greater mysterious truth and of an entire living in the Divine; action can and should be continued even after perfection and freedom are won. I ask of you the action of the Jivanmukta, the works of the Siddha. Something has to be added to the Yoga already described, – for that was only a first Yoga of knowledge. There is also a Yoga of action in the illumination of God-experience; works can be made one spirit with knowledge. For works done in a total self-vision and God-vision, a vision of God in the world and of the world in God are themselves a movement of knowledge, a movement of light, an indispensable means and an intimate part of spiritual perfection.

“Therefore now to the experience of a high impersonality add too this knowledge that the Supreme whom one meets as the pure silent self can be met also as a vast dynamic Spirit who originates all works and is Lord of the worlds and the Master of man’s action and endeavour and sacrifice. This apparently self-acting mechanism of Nature conceals an immanent divine Will that compels and guides it and shapes its purposes. But you cannot feel or know that Will while you are shut up in your narrow cell of personality, blinded and chained to your viewpoint of the ego and its desires. For you can wholly respond to it only when you are impersonalised by knowledge and widened to see all things in the self and in God and the self and God in all things. All becomes here by the power of the Spirit; all do their works by the immanence of God in things and his presence in the heart of every creature. The Creator of the worlds is not limited by his creations; the Lord of works is not bound by his works; the divine Will is not attached to its labour and the results of its labour: for it is omnipotent, all-possessing and all-blissful. But still the Lord looks down on his creations from his transcendence; he descends as the Avatar; he is here in you; he rules from within all things in the steps of their nature. And you too must do works in him after the way and in the steps of the divine

nature untouched by limitation, attachment or bondage. Act for the best good of all, act for the maintenance of the march of the world, for the support or the leading of its peoples. The action asked of you is the action of the liberated Yogin; it is the spontaneous output of a free God-held energy, it is an equal-minded movement, it is a selfless and desireless labour.

“The first step on this free, this equal, this divine way of action is to put from you attachment to fruit and recompense and to labour only for the sake of the work itself that has to be done. For you must deeply feel that the fruits belong not to you but to the Master of the world. Consecrate your labour and leave its returns to the Spirit who manifests and fulfils himself in the universal movement. The outcome of your action is determined by his will alone and whatever it be, good or evil fortune, success or failure, it is turned by him to the accomplishment of his world purpose. An entirely desireless and disinterested working of the personal will and the whole instrumental nature is the first rule of Karmayoga. Demand no fruit, accept whatever result is given to you; accept it with equality and a calm gladness: successful or foiled, prosperous or afflicted, continue unafraid, untroubled and unwavering on the steep path of the divine action.

“This is no more than the first step on the path. For you must be not only unattached to results, but unattached also to your labour. Cease to regard your works as your own; as you have abandoned the fruits of your work, so you must surrender the work also to the Lord of action and sacrifice. Recognise that your nature determines your action; your nature rules the immediate motion of your Swabhava and decides the expressive turn and development of your spirit in the paths of the executive force of Prakriti. Bring in no longer any self-will to confuse the steps of your mind in following the Godward way. Accept the action proper to your nature. Make of all you do from the greatest and most unusual effort to the smallest daily act, make of each act of your mind, each act of your heart, each act of your body, of every inner and outer turn, of every thought and will and feeling, of every step and pause and movement a sacrifice to the Master of all sacrifice and Tapasya.

“Next know that you are an eternal portion of the Eternal and the powers of your nature are nothing without him, nothing if not his partial self-expression. It is the Divine Infinite that is being progressively fulfilled in your nature. It is the supreme power-to-be, it is the Shakti of the Lord that shapes and takes shape in your swabhava. Give up then all sense that you are the doer; see the Eternal alone as the doer of the action. Let your natural being be an occasion, an instrument, a channel of power, a means of manifestation. Offer up your will to him and make it one with his eternal will: surrender all your actions in the silence of your self and spirit to the transcendent Master of your nature. This cannot be really done or done perfectly so long as there is any ego sense in you or any mental claim or vital clamour. Action done in the least degree for the sake of the ego or tinged with the

desire and will of the ego is not a perfect sacrifice. Nor can this great thing be well and truly done so long as there is inequality anywhere or any stamp of ignorant shrinking and preference. But when there is a perfect equality to all works, results, things and persons, a surrender to the Highest and not to desire or ego, then the divine Will determines without stumbling or deflection and the divine Power executes freely without any nether interference or preventing reaction all works in the purity and safety of your transmuted nature. To allow your every act to be shaped through you by the divine Will in its immaculate sovereignty is the highest degree of the perfection that comes by doing works in Yoga. That done, your nature will follow its cosmic walk in a complete and constant union with the Supreme, express the highest Self, obey the Ishwara.

“This way of divine works is a far better release and a more perfect way and solution than the physical renunciation of life and works. A physical abstention is not entirely possible and is not in the measure of its possibility indispensable to the spirit’s freedom; it is besides a dangerous example, for it exerts a misleading influence on ordinary men. The best, the greatest set the standard which the rest of humanity strive to follow. Then, since action is the nature of the embodied spirit, since works are the will of the eternal Worker, the great spirits, the master-minds should set this example. World-workers should they be, doing all works of the world without reservation, — God-workers free, glad and desireless, liberated souls and natures.

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“The mind of knowledge and the will of action are not all; there is within you a heart whose demand is for delight. Here too in the heart’s power and illumination, in its demand for delight, for the soul’s satisfaction your nature must be turned, transformed and lifted to one conscious ecstasy with the Divine. The knowledge of the impersonal self brings its own Ananda; there is a joy of impersonality, a singleness of joy of the pure spirit. But an integral knowledge brings a greater triple delight. It opens the gates of the Transcendent’s bliss; it releases into the limitless delight of a universal impersonality; it discovers the rapture of all this multitudinous manifestation: for there is a joy of the Eternal in Nature. This Ananda in the Jiva, a portion here of the Divine, takes the form of an ecstasy founded in the Godhead who is his source, in his supreme self, in the Master of his existence. An entire God-love and adoration extends to a love of the world and all its forms and powers and creatures; in all the Divine is seen, is found, is adored, is served or is felt in oneness. Add to knowledge and works this crown of the eternal triune delight; admit this love, learn this worship: make it one spirit with works and knowledge. That is the apex of the perfect perfection.

“This Yoga of love will give you a highest potential force for spiritual largeness and unity and freedom. But it must be a love which is one with God-knowledge. There is a devotion which seeks God in suffering for consolation and succour and

deliverance: there is a devotion which seeks him for his gifts, for divine aid and protection and as a fountain of the satisfaction of desire: there is a devotion that, still ignorant, turns to him for light and knowledge. And so long as one is limited to these forms, there may persist even in their highest and noblest Godward turn a working of the three gunas. But when the God-lover is also the God-knower, the lover becomes one self with the Beloved; for he is the chosen of the Most High and the elect of the Spirit. Develop in yourself this God-engrossed love; the heart spiritualised and lifted beyond the limitations of its lower nature will reveal to you most intimately the secrets of God's immeasurable being, bring into you the whole touch and influx and glory of his divine Power and open to you the mysteries of an eternal rapture. It is perfect love that is the key to a perfect knowledge.

"This integral God-love demands too an integral work for the sake of the Divine in yourself and in all creatures. The ordinary man does works in obedience to some desire sinful or virtuous, some vital impulse low or high, some mental choice common or exalted or from some mixed mind and life motive. But the work done by you must be free and desireless; work done without desire creates no reaction and imposes no bondage. Done in a perfect equality and an unmoved calm and peace, but without any divine passion, it is at first the fine yoke of a spiritual obligation, *kartavyam karma*, then the uplifting of a divine sacrifice; at its highest it can be the expression of a calm and glad acquiescence in active oneness. The oneness in love will do much more: it will replace the first impassive calm by a strong and deep rapture, not the petty ardour of egoistic desire but the ocean of the infinite Ananda. It will bring the moving sense and the pure and divine passion of the presence of the Beloved into your works; there will be an insistent joy of labour for God in yourself and for God in all beings. Love is the crown of works and the crown of knowledge.

"This love that is knowledge, this love that can be the deep heart of your action, will be your most effective force for an utter consecration and complete perfection. An integral union of the individual's being with the Divine Being is the condition of a perfect spiritual life. Turn then altogether towards the Divine; make one with him by knowledge, love and works all your nature. Turn utterly towards him and give up ungrudgingly into his hands your mind and your heart and your will, all your consciousness and even your very senses and body. Let your consciousness be sovereignly moulded by him into a flawless mould of his divine consciousness. Let your heart become a lucid or flaming heart of the Divine. Let your will be an impeccable action of his will. Let your very sense and body be the rapturous sensation and body of the Divine. Adore and sacrifice to him with all you are; remember him in every thought and feeling, every impulsion and act. Persevere until all these things are wholly his and he has taken up even in most common and outward things as in the inmost sacred chamber of your spirit his constant transmuting presence.

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"This triune way is the means by which you can rise entirely out of your lower into your supreme spiritual nature. That is the hidden superconscient nature in which the Jiva, a portion of the high Infinite and Divine and intimately one in law of being with him, dwells in his Truth and not any longer in an externalised Maya. This perfection, this unity can be enjoyed in its own native status, aloof in a supreme supracosmic existence: but here also you may and should realise it, here in the human body and physical world. It is not enough for this end to be calm, inactive and free from the gunas in the inner self and to watch and allow indifferently their mechanical action in the outer members. For the active nature as well as the self has to be given to the Divine and to become divine. All that you are must grow into one law of being with the Purushottama, *sādharmya*; all must be changed into my conscious spiritual becoming, *madbhāva*. A completest surrender must be there. Take refuge with Me in all the many ways and along all the living lines of your nature; for that alone will bring about this great change and perfection.

"This high consummation of the Yoga will at once solve or rather it will wholly remove and destroy at its roots the problem of action. Human action is a thing full of difficulties and perplexities, tangled and confused like a forest with a few more or less obscure paths cut into it rather than through it; but all this difficulty and entanglement arises from the single fact that man lives imprisoned in the ignorance of his mental, vital and physical nature. He is compelled by its qualities and yet afflicted with responsibility in his will because something in him feels that he is a soul who ought to be what now he is not at all or very little, master and ruler of his nature. All his laws of living, all his dharmas must be under these conditions imperfect, temporary and provisional and at best only partly right or true. His imperfections can cease only when he knows himself, knows the real nature of the world in which he lives and, most of all, knows the Eternal from whom he comes and in whom and by whom he exists. When he has once achieved a true consciousness and knowledge, there is no longer any problem; for then he acts freely out of himself and lives spontaneously in accordance with the truth of his spirit and his highest nature. At its fullest, at the highest height of this knowledge it is not he who acts but the Divine, the One eternal and infinite who acts in him and through him in his liberated wisdom and power and perfection.

"Man in his natural being is a sattwic, rajasic and tamasic creature of Nature. According as one or other of her qualities predominates in him, he makes and follows this or that law of his life and action. His tamasic, material, sensational mind subject to inertia and fear and ignorance either obeys partly the compulsion of its environment and partly the spasmodic impulses of its desires or finds a protection in the routine following of a dull customary intelligence. The rajasic mind of desire struggles with the world in which it lives and tries to possess always new things, to command, battle, conquer, create, destroy, accumulate. Always it goes forward tossed between success and failure, joy and sorrow, exultation or despair. But in all, whatever law it may seem to admit, it follows really only the law of the lower self

and ego, the restless, untired, self-devouring and all-devouring mind of the Asuric and Rakshasic nature. The sattwic intelligence surmounts partly this state, sees that a better law than that of desire and ego must be followed and erects and imposes on itself a social, an ethical, a religious rule, a Dharma, a Shastra. This is as high as the ordinary mind of man can go, to erect an ideal or practical rule for the guidance of the mind and will and as faithfully as possible observe it in life and conduct. This sattwic mind must be developed to its highest point where it succeeds in putting away the mixture of ego motive altogether and observes the Dharma for its own sake as an impersonal social, ethical or religious ideal, the thing disinterestedly to be done solely because it is right, *kartavyam karma*.

“The real truth of all this action of Prakriti is, however, less outwardly mental and more inwardly subjective. It is this that man is an embodied soul involved in material and mental nature and he follows in it a progressive law of his development determined by an inner law of his being; his cast of spirit makes out his cast of mind and life, his swabhava. Each man has a swadharma, a law of his inner being which he must observe, find out and follow. The action determined by his inner nature, that is his real Dharma. To follow it is the true law of his development; to deviate from it is to bring in confusion, retardation and error. That social, ethical, religious or other law and ideal is best for him always which helps him to observe and follow out his Swadharma.

“All this action, however, is even at its best subject to the ignorance of the mind and the play of the gunas. It is only when the soul of man finds itself that he can overpass and erase from his consciousness the ignorance and the confusion of the gunas. It is true that even when you have found yourself and live in your self, your nature will still continue on its old lines and act for a time according to its inferior modes. But now you can follow that action with a perfect self-knowledge and can make of it a sacrifice to the Master of your existence. Follow then the law of your Swadharma, do the action that is demanded by your Swabhava whatever it may be. Reject all motive of egoism, all initiation by self-will, all rule of desire, until you can make the complete surrender of all the ways of your being to the Supreme.

“And when you are once able to do that sincerely, that will be the moment to renounce the initiation of your acts without exception into the hands of the supreme Godhead within you. Then you will be released from all laws of conduct, liberated from all dharmas. The Divine Power and Presence within you will free you from sin and evil and lift you far above human standards of virtue. For you will live and act in the absolute and spontaneous right and purity of the spiritual being and the divine nature. The Divine and not you will enact his own will and works through you, not for your lower personal pleasure and desire, but for the world-purpose and for your divine good and the manifest or secret good of all. Inundated with light, you will see the form of the Godhead in the world and in the works of Time, know his purpose and hear his command. Your nature will receive as an instrument his will only

whatever it may be and do it without question, because there will come with each initiation of your acts from above and within you an imperative knowledge and an illumined assent to the divine wisdom and its significance. The battle will be his, his the victory, his the empire.

“This will be your perfection in the world and the body, and beyond these worlds of temporal birth the supreme eternal superconsciousness will be yours and you will dwell for ever in the highest status of the Supreme Spirit. The cycles of incarnation and the fear of mortality will not distress you; for here in life you will have accomplished the expression of the Godhead, and your soul, even though it has descended into mind and body, will already be living in the vast eternity of the Spirit.

“This then is the supreme movement, this complete surrender of your whole self and nature, this abandonment of all dharmas to the Divine who is your highest Self, this absolute aspiration of all your members to the supreme spiritual nature. If you can once achieve it, whether at the outset or much later on the way, then whatever you are or were in your outward nature, your way is sure and your perfection inevitable. A supreme Presence within you will take up your Yoga and carry it swiftly along the lines of your Swabhava to its consummate completion. And afterwards whatever your way of life and mode of action, you will be consciously living, acting and moving in him and the Divine Power will act through you in your every inner and outer motion. This is the supreme way because it is the highest secret and mystery and yet an inner movement progressively realisable by all. This is the deepest and most intimate truth of your real, your spiritual existence.”



Principle of the Integral Yoga

The principle of Yoga is the turning of one or of all powers of our human existence into a means of reaching the divine Being. In an ordinary Yoga one main power of being or one group of its powers is made the means, vehicle, path. In a synthetic Yoga all powers will be combined and included in the transmuting instrumentation.

In Hathayoga the instrument is the body and life. All the power of the body is stilled, collected, purified, heightened, concentrated to its utmost limits or beyond any limits by Asana and other physical processes; the power of the life too is similarly purified, heightened, concentrated by Asana and Pranayama. This concentration of powers is then directed towards that physical centre in which the divine consciousness sits concealed in the human body. The power of Life, Nature-power, coiled up with all its secret forces asleep in the lowest nervous plexus of the earth-being, — for only so much escapes into waking action in our normal operations as is sufficient for the limited uses of human life, — rises awakened through centre after centre and awakens, too, in its ascent and passage the forces of each successive nodus of our being, the nervous life, the heart of emotion and ordinary mentality, the speech, sight, will, the higher knowledge, till through and above the brain it meets with and it becomes one with the divine consciousness.

In Rajayoga the chosen instrument is the mind. Our ordinary mentality is first disciplined, purified and directed towards the divine Being, then by a summary process of Asana and Pranayama the physical force of our being is stilled and concentrated, the life-force released into a rhythmic movement capable of cessation and concentrated into a higher power of its upward action, the mind, supported and strengthened by this greater action and concentration of the body and life upon which it rests, is itself purified of all its unrest and emotion and its habitual thought-waves, liberated from distraction and dispersion, given its highest force of concentration, gathered up into a trance of absorption. Two objects, the one temporal, the other eternal, are gained by this discipline. Mind-power develops in another concentrated action abnormal capacities of knowledge, effective will, deep light of reception, powerful light of thought-radiation which are altogether beyond the narrow range of our normal mentality; it arrives at the Yogic or occult powers around which there has been woven so much quite dispensable and yet perhaps salutary mystery. But the one final end and the one all-important gain is that the mind, stilled and cast into a concentrated trance, can lose itself in the divine consciousness and the soul be made free to unite with the divine Being.

The triple way takes for its chosen instruments the three main powers of the mental soul-life of the human being. Knowledge selects the reason and the mental vision and it makes them by purification, concentration and a certain discipline of a God-directed seeking its means for the greatest knowledge and the greatest vision of all, God-knowledge and God-vision. Its aim is to see, know and be the Divine.

Works, action selects for its instrument the will of the doer of works; it makes life an offering of sacrifice to the Godhead and by purification, concentration and a certain discipline of subjection to the divine Will a means for contact and increasing unity of the soul of man with the divine Master of the universe. Devotion selects the emotional and aesthetic powers of the soul and by turning them all Godward in a perfect purity, intensity, infinite passion of seeking makes them a means of God-possession in one or many relations of unity with the Divine Being. All aim in their own way at a union or unity of the human soul with the supreme Spirit.

Each Yoga in its process has the character of the instrument it uses; thus the Hathayogic process is psycho-physical, the Rajayogic mental and psychic, the way of knowledge is spiritual and cognitive, the way of devotion spiritual, emotional and aesthetic, the way of works spiritual and dynamic by action. Each is guided in the ways of its own characteristic power. But all power is in the end one, all power is really soul-power. In the ordinary process of life, body and mind this truth is quite obscured by the dispersed, dividing and distributive action of Nature which is the normal condition of all our functionings, although even there it is in the end evident; for all material energy contains hidden the vital, mental, psychic, spiritual energy and in the end it must release these forms of the one Shakti, the vital energy conceals and liberates into action all the other forms, the mental supporting itself on the life and body and their powers and functionings contains undeveloped or only partially developed the psychic and the spiritual power of the being. But when by Yoga any of these powers is taken up from the dispersed and distributive action, raised to its highest degree, concentrated, it becomes manifest soul-power and reveals the essential unity. Therefore the Hathayogic process has too its pure psychic and spiritual result, the Rajayogic arrives by psychic means at a spiritual consummation. The triple way may appear to be altogether mental and spiritual in its way of seeking and its objectives, but it can be attended by results more characteristic of the other paths, which offer themselves in a spontaneous and involuntary flowering, and for the same reason, because soul-power is all-power and where it reaches its height in one direction its other possibilities also begin to show themselves in fact or in incipient potentiality. This unity at once suggests the possibility of a synthetic Yoga.

Tantric discipline is in its nature a synthesis. It has seized on the large universal truth that there are two poles of being whose essential unity is the secret of existence, Brahman and Shakti, Spirit and Nature, and that Nature is power of the spirit or rather is spirit as power. To raise nature in man into manifest power of spirit is its method and it is the whole nature that it gathers up for the spiritual conversion. It includes in its system of instrumentation the forceful Hathayogic process and especially the opening up of the nervous centres and the passage through them of the awakened Shakti on her way to her union with the Brahman, the subtler stress of the Rajayogic purification, meditation and concentration, the leverage of will-force, the motive power of devotion, the key of knowledge. But it does not stop short with an effective assembling of the different powers of these specific Yogas. In

two directions it enlarges by its synthetic turn the province of the Yogic method. First, it lays its hand firmly on many of the main springs of human quality, desire, action and it subjects them to an intensive discipline with the soul's mastery of its motives as a first aim and their elevation to a diviner spiritual level as its final utility. Again, it includes in its objects of Yoga not only liberation,¹ which is the one all-mastering preoccupation of the specific systems, but a cosmic enjoyment² of the power of the Spirit, which the others may take incidentally on the way, in part, casually, but avoid making a motive or object. It is a bolder and larger system.

In the method of synthesis which we have been following, another clue of principle has been pursued which is derived from another view of the possibilities of Yoga. This starts from the method of Vedanta to arrive at the aim of the Tantra. In the tantric method Shakti is all-important, becomes the key to the finding of spirit; in this synthesis spirit, soul is all-important, becomes the secret of the taking up of Shakti. The tantric method starts from the bottom and grades the ladder of ascent upwards to the summit; therefore its initial stress is upon the action of the awakened Shakti in the nervous system of the body and its centres; the opening of the six lotuses is the opening up of the ranges of the power of Spirit. Our synthesis takes man as a spirit in mind much more than a spirit in body and assumes in him the capacity to begin on that level, to spiritualise his being by the power of the soul in mind opening itself directly to a higher spiritual force and being and to perfect by that higher force so possessed and brought into action the whole of his nature. For that reason our initial stress has fallen upon the utilisation of the powers of soul in mind and the turning of the triple key of knowledge, works and love in the locks of the spirit; the Hathayogic methods can be dispensed with, – though there is no objection to their partial use, – the Rajayogic will only enter in as an informal element. To arrive by the shortest way at the largest development of spiritual power and being and divinise by it a liberated nature in the whole range of human living is our inspiring motive.

The principle in view is a self-surrender, a giving up of the human being into the being, consciousness, power, delight of the Divine, a union or communion at all the points of meeting in the soul of man, the mental being, by which the Divine himself, directly and without veil master and possessor of the instrument, shall by the light of his presence and guidance perfect the human being in all the forces of the Nature for a divine living. Here we arrive at a farther enlargement of the objects of the Yoga. The common initial purpose of all Yoga is the liberation of the soul of man from its present natural ignorance and limitation, its release into spiritual being, its union with the highest self and Divinity. But ordinarily this is made not only the initial but the whole and final object: enjoyment of spiritual being there is, but either in a dissolution of the human and individual into the silence of self-being or on a higher plane in another existence. The Tantric system makes liberation the final, but not the only aim; it takes on its way a full perfection and enjoyment of the spiritual power, light and joy in the human existence, and even it has a glimpse of a supreme

¹ *mukti* ² *bhukti*

experience in which liberation and cosmic action and enjoyment are unified in a final overcoming of all oppositions and dissonances. It is this wider view of our spiritual potentialities from which we begin, but we add another stress which brings in a completer significance. We regard the spirit in man not as solely an individual being travelling to a transcendent unity with the Divine, but as a universal being capable of oneness with the Divine in all souls and all Nature and we give this extended view its entire practical consequence. The human soul's individual liberation and enjoyment of union with the Divine in spiritual being, consciousness and delight must always be the first object of the Yoga; its free enjoyment of the cosmic unity of the Divine becomes a second object; but out of that a third appears, the effectuation of the meaning of the divine unity with all beings by a sympathy and participation in the spiritual purpose of the Divine in humanity. The individual Yoga then turns from its separateness and becomes a part of the collective Yoga of the divine Nature in the human race. The liberated individual being, united with the Divine in self and spirit, becomes in his natural being a self-perfecting instrument for the perfect outflowing of the Divine in humanity.

This outflowing has its two terms; first, comes the growth out of the separative human ego into the unity of the spirit, then the possession of the divine nature in its proper and its higher forms and no longer in the inferior forms of the mental being which are a mutilated translation and not the authentic text of the original script of divine Nature in the cosmic individual. In other words, a perfection has to be aimed at which amounts to the elevation of the mental into the full spiritual and supramental nature. Therefore this integral Yoga of knowledge, love and works has to be extended into a Yoga of spiritual and gnostic self-perfection. As gnostic knowledge, will and ananda are a direct instrumentation of spirit and can only be won by growing into the spirit, into divine being, this growth has to be the first aim of our Yoga. The mental being has to enlarge itself into the oneness of the Divine before the Divine will perfect in the soul of the individual its gnostic outflowing. That is the reason why the triple way of knowledge, works and love becomes the key-note of the whole Yoga, for that is the direct means for the soul in mind to rise to its highest intensities where it passes upward into the divine oneness. That too is the reason why the Yoga must be integral. For if immergence in the Infinite or some close union with the Divine were all our aim, an integral Yoga would be superfluous, except for such greater satisfaction of the being of man as we may get by a self-lifting of the whole of it towards its Source. But it would not be needed for the essential aim, since by any single power of the soul-nature we can meet with the Divine; each at its height rises up into the infinite and absolute, each therefore offers a sufficient way of arrival, for all the hundred separate paths meet in the Eternal. But the gnostic being is a complete enjoyment and possession of the whole divine and spiritual nature; and it is a complete lifting of the whole nature of man into its power of a divine and spiritual existence. Integrality becomes then an essential condition of this Yoga.





The Integral Yoga – Its Object and Method

• Rejects world as maya
• life is real, life has meaning
• All life is school and all is to be
retained on earth

• Perfect life here

What is the integral Yoga?

It is the way of a complete God-realisation, a complete Self-realisation, a complete fulfilment of our being and consciousness, a complete transformation of our nature – and this implies a complete perfection of life here and not only a return to an eternal perfection elsewhere.

This is the object, but in the method also there is the same integrality, for the entirety of the object cannot be accomplished without an entirety in the method, a complete turning, opening, self-giving of our being and nature in all its parts, ways, movements to that which we realise.

Our mind, will, heart, life, body, our outer and inner and inmost existence, our superconscious and subconscious as well as our conscious parts, must all be thus given, must all become a means, a field of this realisation and transformation and participate in the illumination and the change from a human into a divine consciousness and nature.

This is the character of the integral Yoga.

mind, will, heart, life, body

I have never said that my yoga was something brand new in all its elements. I have called it the integral yoga and that means that it takes up the essence and many processes of the old yogas – its newness is in its aim, standpoint and the totality of its method...

I laid emphasis on it as new in a letter to certain sadhaks so as to explain to them that a repetition of the aim and idea of the old yogas was not enough in my eyes, that I was putting forward a thing to be achieved that has not yet been achieved, not yet clearly visualised, even though it is the natural but still secret outcome of all the past spiritual endeavour.

It is new as compared with the old yogas:

- in my eyes
1. Because it aims not at a departure out of world and life into Heaven or Nirvana, but at a change of life and existence, not as something subordinate or incidental, but as a distinct and central object. If there is a descent in other yogas, yet it is only an incident on the way or resulting from the ascent – the ascent is the real thing. Here the ascent is the first step, but it is a means for the descent. It is the descent of the new consciousness attained by the ascent that is the stamp and seal of the sadhana. Even the Tantra and Vaishnavism end in the release from life; here the object is the divine fulfilment of life.
 2. Because the object sought after is not an individual achievement of divine realisation for the sake of the individual, but something to be gained for the earth-consciousness here, a cosmic, not solely a supra-cosmic achievement. The thing to be gained also is the bringing in of a Power of

Consciousness (the supramental) not yet organised or active directly in earth-nature, even in the spiritual life, but yet to be organised and made directly active.

- 3) Because a method has been preconized for achieving this purpose which is as total and integral as the aim set before it, viz., the total and integral change of the consciousness and nature, taking up old methods but only as a part action and present aid to others that are distinctive. I have not found this method (as a whole) or anything like it professed or realised in the old yogas. If I had, I should not have wasted my time in hewing out a road and in thirty years of search and inner creation when I could have hastened home safely to my goal in an easy canter over paths already blazed out, laid down, perfectly mapped, macadamised, made secure and public. Our yoga is not a retreading of old walks, but a spiritual adventure.

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It is not a fact that the Gita gives the whole base of Sri Aurobindo's message;... it does not bring forward the idea of spiritual evolution or the idea of the higher planes and the supramental Truth-Consciousness and the bringing down of that consciousness as the means of the complete transformation of earthly life.

The idea of the supermind, the Truth-Consciousness is there in the Rig Veda according to Sri Aurobindo's interpretation and in one or two passages of the Upanishads, but in the Upanishads it is there only in seed in the conception of the being of knowledge, vijñānamaya puruṣa, exceeding the mental, vital and physical being; in the Rig Veda the idea is there but in principle only, it is not developed and even the principle of it has disappeared from the Hindu tradition.

It is these things among others that constitute the novelty of Sri Aurobindo's message as compared with the Hindu tradition – the idea that the world is not either a creation of Maya or only a play, līlā, of the Divine, or a cycle of births in the ignorance from which we have to escape, but a field of manifestation in which there is a progressive evolution of the soul and the nature in Matter and from Matter through Life and Mind to what is beyond Mind till it reaches the complete revelation of Sachchidananda in life. It is this that is the basis of the yoga and gives a new sense to life.

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Our yoga is not identical with the yoga of the Gita although it contains all that is essential in the Gita's yoga. In our yoga we begin with the idea, the will, the aspiration of the complete surrender; but at the same time we have to reject the lower nature, deliver our consciousness from it, deliver the self involved in the lower nature by the self rising to freedom in the higher nature. If we do not do this double movement, we are in danger of making a tamasic and therefore unreal surrender, making no effort, no tapas and therefore no progress; or else we may make a rajasic

surrender not to the Divine but to some self-made false idea or image of the Divine which masks our rajasic ego or something still worse.

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... this is not a yoga of bhakti alone; it is or at least it claims to be an integral yoga, that is, a turning of all the being in all its parts to the Divine. It follows that there must be knowledge and works as well as bhakti, and in addition, it includes a total change of the nature, a seeking for perfection, so that the nature also may become one with the nature of the Divine. It is not only the heart that has to turn to the Divine and change, but the mind also – so knowledge is necessary, and the will and power of action and creation also – so works too are necessary. In this yoga the methods of other yogas are taken up – like this of Purusha-Prakriti, but with a difference in the final object. Purusha separates from Prakriti, not in order to abandon her, but in order to know himself and her and to be no longer her plaything, but the knower, lord and upholder of the nature; but having become so or even in becoming so, one offers all that to the Divine. One may begin with knowledge or with works or with bhakti or with Tapasya of self-purification for perfection (change of nature) and develop the rest as a subsequent movement or one may combine all in one movement. There is no single rule for all, it depends on the personality and the nature. Surrender is the main power of the yoga, but the surrender is bound to be progressive; a complete surrender is not possible in the beginning, but only a will in the being for that completeness, – in fact it takes time; yet it is only when the surrender is complete that the full flood of the sadhana is possible. Till then there must be the personal effort with an increasing reality of surrender.

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The personal effort required is a triple labour of aspiration, rejection and surrender, – an aspiration vigilant, constant, unceasing – the mind's will, the heart's seeking, the assent of the vital being, the will to open and make plastic the physical consciousness and nature;

rejection of the movements of the lower nature – rejection of the mind's ideas, opinions, preferences, habits, constructions, so that the true knowledge may find free room in a silent mind, – rejection of the vital nature's desires, demands, cravings, sensations, passions, selfishness, pride, arrogance, lust, greed, jealousy, envy, hostility to the Truth, so that the true power and joy may pour from above into a calm, large, strong and consecrated vital being, – rejection of the physical nature's stupidity, doubt, disbelief, obscurity, obstinacy, pettiness, laziness, unwillingness to change, Tamas, so that the true stability of Light, Power, Ananda may establish itself in a body growing always more divine;

surrender of oneself and all one is and has and every plane of the consciousness and every movement to the Divine and the Shakti.

True Object of Life – Integral Divine Perfection

A divine perfection of the human being is our aim. We must know then, first, what are the essential elements that constitute man's total perfection; secondly, what we mean by a divine as distinguished from a human perfection of our being. That man as a being is capable of self-development and of some approach at least to an ideal standard of perfection which his mind is able to conceive, fix before it and pursue, is common ground to all thinking humanity, though it may be only the minority who concern themselves with this possibility as providing the one most important aim of life. But by some the ideal is conceived as a mundane change, by others as a religious conversion.

The mundane perfection is sometimes conceived of as something outward, social, a thing of action, a more rational dealing with our fellow-men and our environment, a better and more efficient citizenship and discharge of duties, a better, richer, kindlier and happier way of living, with a more just and more harmonious associated enjoyment of the opportunities of existence. By others again a more inner and subjective ideal is cherished, a clarifying and raising of the intelligence, will and reason, a heightening and ordering of power and capacity in the nature, a nobler ethical, a richer aesthetic, a finer emotional, a much healthier and better-governed vital and physical being. Sometimes one element is stressed, almost to the exclusion of the rest; sometimes, in wider and more well-balanced minds, the whole harmony is envisaged as a total perfection. A change of education and social institutions is the outward means adopted or an inner self-training and development is preferred as the true instrumentation. Or the two aims may be clearly united, the perfection of the inner individual, the perfection of the outer living.

But the mundane aim takes for its field the present life and its opportunities; the religious aim, on the contrary, fixes before it the self-preparation for another existence after death, its commonest ideal is some kind of pure sainthood, its means a conversion of the imperfect or sinful human being by divine grace or through obedience to a law laid down by a scripture or else given by a religious founder. The aim of religion may include a social change, but it is then a change brought about by the acceptance of a common religious ideal and way of consecrated living, a brotherhood of the saints, a theocracy or kingdom of God reflecting on earth the kingdom of heaven.

The object of our synthetic Yoga must, in this respect too as in its other parts, be more integral and comprehensive, embrace all these elements or these tendencies of a larger impulse of self-perfection and harmonise them or rather unify, and in order to do that successfully it must seize on a truth which is wider than the ordinary religious and higher than the mundane principle. All life is a secret Yoga, an obscure

growth of Nature towards the discovery and fulfilment of the divine principle hidden in her which becomes progressively less obscure, more self-conscious and luminous, more self-possessed in the human being by the opening of all his instruments of knowledge, will, action, life to the Spirit within him and in the world. Mind, life, body, all the forms of our nature are the means of this growth, but they find their last perfection only by opening out to something beyond them, first, because they are not the whole of what man is, secondly, because that other something which he is, is the key of his completeness and brings a light which discovers to him the whole high and large reality of his being.

Mind is fulfilled by a greater knowledge of which it is only a half-light, life discovers its meaning in a greater power and will of which it is the outward and as yet obscure functioning, body finds its last use as an instrument of a power of being of which it is a physical support and material starting-point. They have all themselves first to be developed and find out their ordinary possibilities; all our normal life is a trying of these possibilities and an opportunity for this preparatory and tentative self-training. But life cannot find its perfect self-fulfilment till it opens to that greater reality of being of which by this development of a richer power and a more sensitive use and capacity it becomes a well-prepared field of working.

Intellectual, volitional, ethical, emotional, aesthetic and physical training and improvement are all so much to the good, but they are only in the end a constant movement in a circle without any last delivering and illumining aim, unless they arrive at a point when they can open themselves to the power and presence of the Spirit and admit its direct workings. This direct working effects a conversion of the whole being which is the indispensable condition of our real perfection. To grow into the truth and power of the Spirit and by the direct action of that power to be made a fit channel of its self-expression, — a living of man in the Divine and a divine living of the Spirit in humanity, — will therefore be the principle and the whole object of an integral Yoga of self-perfection.

In the process of this change there must be by the very necessity of the effort two stages of its working. First, there will be the personal endeavour of the human being, as soon as he becomes aware by his soul, mind, heart of this divine possibility and turns towards it as the true object of life, to prepare himself for it and to get rid of all in him that belongs to a lower working, of all that stands in the way of his opening to the spiritual truth and its power, so as to possess by this liberation his spiritual being and turn all his natural movements into free means of its self-expression. It is by this turn that the self-conscious Yoga aware of its aim begins: there is a new awakening and an upward change of the life motive. So long as there is only an intellectual, ethical and other self-training for the now normal purposes of life which does not travel beyond the ordinary circle of working of mind, life and body, we are still only in the obscure and yet unillumined preparatory Yoga of Nature; we are still in pursuit of only an ordinary human perfection. A spiritual

desire of the Divine and of the divine perfection, of a unity with him in all our being and a spiritual perfection in all our nature, is the effective sign of this change, the precursory power of a great integral conversion of our being and living.

By personal effort a precursory change, a preliminary conversion can be effected; it amounts to a greater or less spiritualising of our mental motives, our character and temperament, and a mastery, stilling or changed action of the vital and physical life. This converted subjectivity can be made the base of some communion or unity of the soul in mind with the Divine and some partial reflection of the divine nature in the mentality of the human being. That is as far as man can go by his unaided or indirectly aided effort, because that is an effort of mind and mind cannot climb beyond itself permanently: at most it arises to a spiritualised and idealised mentality. If it shoots up beyond that border, it loses hold of itself, loses hold of life, and arrives either at a trance of absorption or a passivity. A greater perfection can only be arrived at by a higher power entering in and taking up the whole action of the being. The second stage of this Yoga will therefore be a persistent giving up of all the action of the nature into the hands of this greater Power, a substitution of its influence, possession and working for the personal effort, until the Divine to whom we aspire becomes the direct master of the Yoga and effects the entire spiritual and ideal conversion of the being....

To open oneself to the supracosmic Divine is an essential condition of this integral perfection; to unite oneself with the universal Divine is another essential condition. Here the Yoga of self-perfection coincides with the Yogas of knowledge, works and devotion; for it is impossible to change the human nature into the divine or to make it an instrument of the divine knowledge, will and joy of existence, unless there is a union with the supreme Being, Consciousness and Bliss and a unity with its universal Self in all things and beings. A wholly separative possession of the divine nature by the human individual, as distinct from a self-withdrawn absorption in it, is not possible. But this unity will not be an inmost spiritual oneness qualified, so long as the human life lasts, by a separative existence in mind, life and body; the full perfection is a possession, through this spiritual unity, of unity too with the universal Mind, the universal Life, the universal Form which are the other constant terms of cosmic being. Moreover, since human life is still accepted as a self-expression of the realised Divine in man, there must be an action of the entire divine substitutes the native action of spiritual being for the imperfect action of the parts by the spiritual ideality. These three elements, a union with the supreme Divine, unity with the universal Self, and a supramental life action from this transcendent origin and through this universality, but still with the individual as the soul-channel and natural instrument, constitute the essence of the integral divine perfection of the human being.



Supermind and the Life Divine

A divine life upon earth, the ideal we have placed before us, can only come about by a spiritual change of our being and a radical and fundamental change, an evolution or revolution of our nature. The embodied being upon earth would have to rise out of the domination over it of its veils of mind, life and body into the full consciousness and possession of its spiritual reality and its nature also would have to be lifted out of the consciousness and power of consciousness proper to a mental, vital and physical being into the greater consciousness and greater power of being and the larger and freer life of the spirit. It would not lose these former veils but they would no longer be veils or imperfect expressions but true manifestations; they would be changed into states of light, powers of spiritual life, vehicles of a spiritual existence. But this again could not be if mind, life and body were not taken up and transformed by a state of being and a force of being superior to them, a power of Supermind as much above our incomplete mental nature as that is above the nature of animal life and animated Matter, as it is immeasurably above the mere material nature. growth

The Supermind is in its very essence a truth-consciousness, a consciousness always free from the Ignorance which is the foundation of our present natural or evolutionary existence and from which nature in us is trying to arrive at self-knowledge and world-knowledge and a right consciousness and the right use of our existence in the universe. The Supermind, because it is a truth-consciousness, has this knowledge inherent in it and this power of true existence; its course is straight and can go direct to its aim, its field is wide and can even be made illimitable. This is because its very nature is knowledge: it has not to acquire knowledge but possesses it in its own right; its steps are not from nescience or ignorance into some imperfect light, but from truth to greater truth, from right perception to deeper perception, from intuition to intuition, from illumination to utter and boundless luminousness, from growing widenings to the utter vasts and to very infinitude. On its summits it possesses the divine omniscience and omnipotence, but even in an evolutionary movement of its own graded self-manifestation by which it would eventually reveal its own highest heights it must be in its very nature essentially free from ignorance and error: it starts from truth and light and moves always in truth and light. As its knowledge is always true, so too its will is always true; it does not fumble in its handling of things or stumble in its paces. In the Supermind feeling and emotion do not depart from their truth, make no slips or mistakes, do not swerve from the right and the real, cannot misuse beauty and delight or twist away from a divine rectitude. In the Supermind sense cannot mislead or deviate into the grossnesses which are here its natural imperfections and the cause of reproach, distrust and misuse by our ignorance. Even an incomplete statement made by the Supermind is a truth leading to a further truth, its incomplete action a step towards completeness. All the life and action and leading of the Supermind is guarded in its very nature from the falsehoods and uncertainties that are our lot; it moves in safety towards its perfection. Once the truth-consciousness was established here on its own sure foundation, the evolution of divine life would be a progress in felicity, a march through light to Ananda. truth

The Triple Transformation

There are a thousand ways of approaching and realising the Divine and each way has its own experiences which have their own truth and stand really on a basis one in essence but complex in aspects, common to all but not expressed in the same way by all. There is not much use in discussing these variations; the important thing is to follow one's own way well and thoroughly. In this yoga, one can realise the psychic being as a portion of the Divine seated in the heart with the Divine supporting it there – this psychic being takes charge of the sadhana and turns the whole being to the Truth, the Divine, with results in the mind, the vital and the physical consciousness which I need not go into here – that is the first transformation. We realise next the one Self, Brahman, Divine, first above the body, life, mind and not only within the heart supporting them – above and free and unattached as the static Self in all and dynamic too as the active Divine Being and Power, Ishwara-Shakti, containing the world and pervading it as well as transcending it, manifesting all cosmic aspects. But what is most important for us is that it manifests as a transcending Light, Knowledge, Power, Purity, Peace, Ananda of which we become aware and which descends into the being and progressively replaces the ordinary consciousness itself by its own movements – that is the second transformation. We realise also the consciousness itself as moving upward, ascending through many planes, physical, vital, mental, overmental to the supramental and Ananda planes. This is nothing new; it is stated in the Taittiriya Upanishad that there are five Purushas, the physical, the vital, the mental, the Truth Purusha (supramental) and the Bliss Purusha; it says that one has to draw the physical self into the vital self, the vital into the mental, the mental into the Truth self, the Truth self into the Bliss self and so attain perfection. But in this yoga we become aware not only of this taking up but of a pouring down of the power of the higher Self, so that there comes in the possibility of a descent of the supramental Self and Nature to dominate and change our present nature and turn it from nature of Ignorance into nature of Truth-Knowledge (and through the supramental into nature of Ananda) – this is the third or supramental transformation. It does not always go in this order, for with many the spiritual descent begins first in an imperfect way before the psychic is in front and in charge, but the psychic development has to be attained before a perfect and unhampered spiritual descent can take place, and the last or supramental change is impossible so long as the two first have not become full and complete. That's the whole matter put as briefly as possible.

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If it is the sole intention of Nature in the evolution of the spiritual man to awaken him to the supreme Reality and release him from herself, or from the Ignorance in which she as the Power of the Eternal has masked herself, by a departure into a higher status of being elsewhere, if this step in the evolution is a close and an exit,

then in the essence her work has been already accomplished and there is nothing more to be done. The ways have been built, the capacity to follow them has been developed, the goal or last height of the creation is manifest; all that is left is for each soul to reach individually the right stage and turn of its development, enter into the spiritual ways and pass by its own chosen path out of this inferior existence. But we have supposed that there is a farther intention, – not only a revelation of the Spirit, but a radical and integral transformation of Nature. There is a will in her to effectuate a true manifestation of the embodied life of the Spirit, to complete what she has begun by a passage from the Ignorance to the Knowledge, to throw off her mask and to reveal herself as the luminous Consciousness-Force carrying in her the eternal Existence and its universal Delight of being. It then becomes obvious that there is something not yet accomplished, there becomes clear to view the much that has still to be done, *bhūri aspaṣṭa kartvam*; there is a height still to be reached, a wideness still to be covered by the eye of vision, the wing of the will, the self-affirmation of the Spirit in the material universe. What the evolutionary Power has done is to make a few individuals aware of their souls, conscious of their selves, aware of the eternal being that they are, to put them into communion with the Divinity or the Reality which is concealed by her appearances: a certain change of nature prepares, accompanies or follows upon this illumination, but it is not the complete and radical change which establishes a secure and settled new principle, a new creation, a permanent new order of being in the field of terrestrial Nature. The spiritual man has evolved, but not the supramental being who shall thenceforward be the leader of that Nature.

This is because the principle of spirituality has yet to affirm itself in its own complete right and sovereignty; it has been up till now a power for the mental being to escape from itself or to refine and raise itself to a spiritual poise, it has availed for the release of the Spirit from mind and for the enlargement of the being in a spiritualised mind and heart, but not, – or rather not yet sufficiently, – for the self-affirmation of the Spirit in its own dynamic and sovereign mastery free from the mind's limitations and from the mental instrumentation. The development of another instrumentation has begun, but has yet to become total and effective; it has besides to cease to be a purely individual self-creation in an original Ignorance, something supernormal to earth-life that must always be acquired as an individual achievement by a difficult endeavour. It must become the normal nature of a new type of being; as Mind is established here on a basis of Ignorance seeking for Knowledge and growing into Knowledge, so Supermind must be established here on a basis of Knowledge growing into its own greater Light. But this cannot be so long as the spiritual-mental being has not risen fully to Supermind and brought down its powers into terrestrial existence. For the gulf between Mind and Supermind has to be bridged, the closed passages opened and roads of ascent and descent created where there is now a void and a silence. This can be done only by the triple transformation to which we have already made a passing reference: there must first be the psychic change, the conversion of our whole present nature into a

soul-instrumentation; on that or along with that there must be the spiritual change, the descent of a higher Light, Knowledge, Power, Force, Bliss, Purity into the whole being, even into the lowest recesses of the life and body, even into the darkness of our subconsciousness; last, there must supervene the supramental transmutation, — there must take place as the crowning movement the ascent into the Supermind and the transforming descent of the supramental Consciousness into our entire being and nature.

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The psychic being stands behind the heart supporting the mind, life and body. In the psychic transformation there are three main elements: (1) the opening of the occult inner mind, inner vital, inner physical, so that one becomes aware of all that lies behind the surface mind, life and body — (2) the opening of the psychic being or soul by which it comes forward and governs the mind, life and body turning all to the Divine — (3) the opening of the whole lower being to the spiritual truth — this last may be called the psycho-spiritual part of the change. It is quite possible for the psychic transformation to take one beyond the individual into the cosmic. Even the occult opening establishes a connection with the cosmic mind, cosmic vital, cosmic physical. The psychic realises the contact with all-existence, the oneness of the Self, the universal love and other realisations which lead to the cosmic consciousness.

But all that is a result of the opening to the spiritual above and it comes by an infiltration or reflection of the spiritual light and truth in mind, life and body. The spiritual transformation proper begins or becomes possible when one rises above the mind and lives there governing all from above. Even in the psychic transformation one can rise above by a sort of going above of the mental, vital, physical being and a return, but one does not yet live above in the summit consciousness where overmind has its seat with the other planes that are above the human Mind.

The supramental transformation can only come when the lid between the lower and higher hemispheres or halves of existence is removed and the supermind instead of the overmind becomes the governing power of the existence...

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All Yoga done through the mind alone or through the heart or the will or the vital force or the body ends in some one aspect of the infinite and eternal Existence and rests satisfied there, as the mind imagines for ever. Not through these alone shall thy Yoga move, but through all these at once and, supremely, through that which is beyond them. And the end of thy Yoga shall be the integrality of thy entrance not into one aspect, but into all the Infinite, all the Eternal, all the Divine in all its aspects indivisibly unified together.

Whatever is beyond mind and life and body is spirit. But spirit can be realised even on these lower levels, in the spiritualised mind, in the spiritualised life-force, even in the spiritualised physical consciousness and body. But if thou rise not up beyond the mind-level, then in these realisations the spirit must needs be modified by the medium through which thou attainest to it, and its supreme truth can only be seized in a reflection, partial even in widest apparent universality, and the utmost essential integrality will escape thy seizure.

Rise rather into the supramental levels and then all the rest shall remain a part of thy experience, but wonderfully changed, transfigured by a supreme alchemy of consciousness into an element of the supramental glory. All that other Yogas can give thee, thou shalt have, but as an experience overpassed, put in its place in the Divine Whole and delivered from the inadequacy of an exclusive state or experience.

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The Supramental Yoga is at once an ascent towards God and a descent of Godhead into the embodied nature.

The ascent can only be achieved by a one-centred all-gathering upward aspiration of the soul and mind and life and body; the descent can only come by a call of the whole being towards the infinite and eternal Divine. If this call and this aspiration are there, or if by any means they can be born and grow constantly and seize all the nature, then and then only a supramental uplifting and transformation becomes possible.

The call and the aspiration are only first conditions; there must be along with them and brought by their effective intensity an opening of all the being to the Divine and a total surrender.

This opening is a throwing wide of all the nature on all its levels and in all its parts to receive into itself without limits the greater divine Consciousness which is there already above and behind and englobing this mortal half-conscious existence.

In the receiving there must be no inability to contain, no breaking down of anything in the system, mind or life or nerve or body under the transmuting stress. There must be an endless receptivity, an always increasing capacity to bear an ever stronger and more and more insistent action of the divine Force. Otherwise nothing great or permanent can be done; the Yoga will end in a breakdown or an inert stoppage or a stultifying or a disastrous arrest in a process which must be absolute and integral if it is not to be a failure.

But since no human system has this endless receptivity and unfailing capacity,

the supramental Yoga can succeed only if the Divine Force, as it descends, increases the personal power and equates the strength that receives with the Force that enters from above to work in the nature. This is only possible if there is on our part a progressive surrender of the being into the hands of the Divine; there must be a complete and never-failing assent, a willingness to let the Divine Power do with us whatever is needed for the work that has to be done.

Man cannot by his own effort make himself more than man; the mental being cannot by his own unaided force change himself into a supramental spirit. A descent of the Divine Nature can alone divinise the human receptacle.

For the powers of our mind, life and body are bound to their own limitations and, however high they may rise or however widely expand, they cannot rise above their natural ultimate limits or expand beyond them. But still, mental man can open to what is beyond him and call down a supramental Light, Truth and Power to work in him and do what the mind cannot do. If mind cannot by effort become what is beyond mind, Supermind can descend and transform mind into its own substance.

If the Supramental Power is allowed by man's discerning assent and vigilant surrender to act according to its own profound and subtle insight and flexible potency, it will bring about slowly or swiftly a divine transformation of our fallen and imperfect nature.

This descent, this working is not without its possibility of calamitous fall and danger. If the human mind or the vital desire seizes hold on the descending force and tries to use it according to its own limited and erring ideas or flawed and egoistic impulses, – and this is inevitable in some degree until this lower mortal has learned something of the way of that greater immortal nature, – stumblings and deviations, hard and seemingly insuperable obstacles and wounds and suffering cannot be escaped and even death or utter downfall are not impossible. Only when the conscious integral surrender to the Divine has been learned by mind and life and body, can the way of the Yoga become easy, straight, swift and safe.

And it must be a surrender and an opening to the Divine alone and to no other. For it is possible for an obscure mind or an impure life-force in us to surrender to undivine and hostile forces and even to mistake them for the Divine. There can be no more calamitous error. Therefore our surrender must be no blind and inert passivity to all influences or any influence, but sincere, conscious, vigilant, pointed to the One and the Highest alone.

Self-surrender to the divine and infinite Mother, however difficult, remains our only effective means and our sole abiding refuge, – self-surrender to her means that our nature must be an instrument in her hands, the soul a child in the arms of the Mother.



*"The Divine Mother is the Consciousness and Force of the Divine
— which is the Mother of all things."*

Conditions for the Coming of a Spiritual Age

A change of this kind, the change from the mental and vital to the spiritual order of life, must necessarily be accomplished in the individual and in a great number of individuals before it can lay any effective hold upon the community. The Spirit in humanity discovers, develops, builds into form in the individual man: it is through the progressive and formative individual that it offers the discovery and the chance of a new self-creation to the mind of the race. For the communal mind holds things subconsciously at first or, if consciously, then in a confused chaotic manner: it is only through the individual mind that the mass can arrive at a clear knowledge and creation of the thing it held in its subconscious self. Thinkers, historians, sociologists who belittle the individual and would like to lose him in the mass or think of him chiefly as a cell, an atom, have got hold only of the obscurer side of the truth of Nature's workings in humanity. It is because man is not like the material formations of Nature or like the animal, because she intends in him a more and more conscious evolution, that individuality is so much developed in him and so absolutely important and indispensable. No doubt what comes out in the individual and afterwards moves the mass, must have been there already in the universal Mind and the individual is only an instrument for its manifestation, discovery, development; but he is an indispensable instrument and an instrument not merely of subconscious Nature, not merely of an instinctive urge that moves the mass, but more directly of the Spirit of whom that Nature is itself the instrument and the matrix of his creations. All great changes therefore find their first clear and effective power and their direct shaping force in the mind and spirit of an individual or of a limited number of individuals. The mass follows, but unfortunately in a very imperfect and confused fashion which often or even usually ends in the failure or distortion of the thing created. If it were not so, mankind could have advanced on its way with a victorious rapidity instead of with the lumbering hesitations and soon exhausted rushes that seem to be all of which it has yet been capable.

Therefore if the spiritual change of which we have been speaking is to be effected, it must unite two conditions which have to be simultaneously satisfied but are most difficult to bring together. There must be the individual and the individuals who are able to see, to develop, to re-create themselves in the image of the Spirit and to communicate both their idea and its power to the mass. And there must be at the same time a mass, a society, a communal mind or at the least the constituents of a group-body, the possibility of a group-soul which is capable of receiving and effectively assimilating, ready to follow and effectively arrive, not compelled by its own inherent deficiencies, its defect of preparation to stop on the way or fall back before the decisive change is made....

What then will be that state of society, what that readiness of the common mind of man which will be most favourable to this change, so that even if it cannot

at once effectuate itself, it may at least make for its ways a more decisive preparation than has been hitherto possible? For that seems the most important element, since it is that, it is the unpreparedness, the unfitness of the society or of the common mind of man which is always the chief stumbling-block. It is the readiness of this common mind which is of the first importance; for even if the condition of society and the principle and rule that govern society are opposed to the spiritual change, even if these belong almost wholly to the vital, to the external, the economic, the mechanical order, as is certainly the way at present with human masses, yet if the common human mind has begun to admit the ideas proper to the higher order that is in the end to be, and the heart of man has begun to be stirred by aspirations born of these ideas, then there is a hope of some advance in the not distant future....

The true secret can only be discovered if ... the idea becomes strong of the Mind itself as no more than a secondary power, of the Spirit's working and of the Spirit as the great Eternal, the original and, in spite of the many terms in which it is both expressed and hidden, the sole reality, *ayam ātmā brahma*. Then only will the real, the decisive endeavour begin and life and the world be studied, known, dealt with in all directions as the self-finding and self-expression of the Spirit. Then only will a spiritual age of mankind be possible....

... a spiritual human society would start from and try to realise three essential truths of existence which all Nature seems to be an attempt to hide by their opposites and which therefore are as yet for the mass of mankind only words and dreams, God, freedom, unity. Three things which are one, for you cannot realise freedom and unity unless you realise God, you cannot possess freedom and unity unless you possess God, possess at once your highest self and the self of all creatures. The freedom and unity which otherwise go by that name, are simply attempts of our subjection and our division to get away from themselves by shutting their eyes while they turn somersaults around their own centre. When man is able to see God and to possess him, then he will know real freedom and arrive at real unity, never otherwise. And God is only waiting to be known, while man seeks for him everywhere and creates images of the Divine, but all the while truly finds, effectively erects and worships images only of his own mind-ego and life-ego. When this ego pivot is abandoned and this ego-hunt ceases, then man gets his first real chance of achieving spirituality in his inner and outer life. It will not be enough, but it will be a commencement, a true gate and not a blind entrance.

A spiritualised society would live like its spiritual individuals, not in the ego, but in the spirit, not as the collective ego, but as the collective soul. This freedom from the egoistic stand-point would be its first and most prominent characteristic. But the elimination of egoism would not be brought about, as it is now proposed to bring it about, by persuading or forcing the individual to immolate his personal will and aspirations and his precious and hard-won individuality to the collective will, aims and egoism of the society, driving him like a victim of ancient sacrifice to slay his

soul on the altar of that huge and shapeless idol. For that would be only the sacrifice of the smaller to the larger egoism, larger only in bulk, not necessarily greater in quality or wider or nobler, since a collective egoism, result of the united egoisms of all, is as little a god to be worshipped, as flawed and often an uglier and more barbarous fetish than the egoism of the individual. What the spiritual man seeks is to find by the loss of the ego the Self which is one in all and perfect and complete in each and by living in that to grow into the image of its perfection, – individually, be it noted, though with an all-embracing universality of his nature and its conscious circumference. It is said in the old Indian writings that while in the second age, the age of Power, Vishnu descends in the King, and in the third, the age of balance, as the legislator or codifier, in the age of the Truth he descends as Yajna, that is to say, as the Master of works manifest in the heart of his creatures. It is this kingdom of God within, the result of the finding of God not in a distant heaven but within ourselves, of which the state of society in an age of the Truth, spiritual age, would be the result and the external figure.

Therefore a society which was even initially spiritualised, would make the revealing and finding of the divine Self in man the whole first aim of all its activities, its education, its knowledge, its science, its ethics, its art, its economical and political structure. As it was to some extent in the ancient Vedic times with the cultural education of the higher classes, so it would be then with all education. It would embrace all knowledge in its scope, but would make the whole trend and aim and the permeating spirit not mere worldly efficiency, but this self-developing and self-finding. It would pursue physical and psychical science not in order merely to know the world and Nature in her processes and to use them for material human ends, but to know through and in and under and over all things the Divine in the world and the ways of the Spirit in its masks and behind them. It would make it the aim of ethics not to establish a rule of action whether supplementary to the social law or partially corrective of it, the social law that is after all only the rule, often clumsy and ignorant, of the biped pack, the human herd, but to develop the divine nature in the human being. It would make it the aim of Art not merely to present images of the subjective and objective world, but to see them with the significant and creative vision that goes behind their appearances and to reveal the Truth and Beauty of which things visible to us and invisible are the forms, the masks or the symbols and significant figures.

A spiritualised society would treat in its sociology the individual, from the saint to the criminal, not as units of a social problem to be passed through some skilfully devised machinery and either flattened into the social mould or crushed out of it, but as souls suffering and entangled in a net and to be rescued, souls growing and to be encouraged to grow, souls grown and from whom help and power can be drawn by the lesser spirits who are not yet adult. The aim of its economics would be not to create a huge engine of production, whether of the competitive or the co-operative kind, but to give to men – not only to some but to all men each in his

highest possible measure – the joy of work according to their own nature and free leisure to grow inwardly, as well as a simply rich and beautiful life for all. In its politics it would not regard the nations within the scope of their own internal life as enormous State machines regulated and armoured with man living for the sake of the machine and worshipping it as his God and his larger self, content at the first call to kill others upon its altar and to bleed there himself so that the machine may remain intact and powerful and be made ever larger, more complex, more cumbrous, more mechanically efficient and entire. Neither would it be content to maintain these nations or States in their mutual relations as noxious engines meant to discharge poisonous gas upon each other in peace and to rush in times of clash upon each other's armed hosts and unarmed millions, full of belching shot and men missioned to murder like hostile tanks in a modern battlefield. It would regard the peoples as group-souls, the Divinity concealed and to be self-discovered in its human collectivities, group-souls meant like the individual to grow according to their own nature and by that growth to help each other, to help the whole race in the one common work of humanity. And that work would be to find the divine Self in the individual and the collectivity and to realise spiritually, mentally, vitally, materially its greatest, largest, richest and deepest possibilities in the inner life of all and their outer action and nature.

For it is into the Divine within each man and each people that the man and the nation have to grow; it is not an external idea or rule that has to be imposed on them from without. Therefore the law of a growing inner freedom is that which will be most honoured in the spiritual age of mankind. True it is that so long as man has not come within measurable distance of self-knowledge and has not set his face towards it, he cannot escape from the law of external compulsion and all his efforts to do so must be vain. He is and always must be, so long as that lasts, the slave of others, the slave of his family, his caste, his clan, his Church, his society, his nation; and he cannot but be that and they too cannot help throwing their crude and mechanical compulsion on him, because he and they are the slaves of their own ego, of their own lower nature. We must feel and obey the compulsion of the Spirit if we would establish our inner right to escape other compulsion; we must make our lower nature the willing slave, the conscious and illumined instrument or the ennobled but still self-subjected portion, consort or partner of the divine Being within us, for it is that subjection which is the condition of our freedom, since spiritual freedom is not the egoistic assertion of our separate mind and life but obedience to the Divine Truth in ourself and our members and in all around us. But we have, even so, to remark that God respects the freedom of the natural members of our being and that he gives them room to grow in their own nature so that by natural growth and not by self-extinction they may find the Divine in themselves. The subjection which they finally accept, complete and absolute, must be a willing subjection of recognition and aspiration to their own source of light and power and their highest being. Therefore even in the unregenerated state we find that the healthiest, the truest, the most living growth and action is that which arises in the

largest possible freedom and that all excess of compulsion is either the law of a gradual atrophy or a tyranny varied or cured by outbreaks of rabid disorder. And as soon as man comes to know his spiritual self, he does by that discovery, often even by the very seeking for it, as ancient thought and religion saw, escape from the outer law and enter into the law of freedom.

A spiritual age of mankind will perceive this truth. It will not try to make man perfect by machinery or keep him straight by tying up all his limbs. It will not present to the member of the society his higher self in the person of the policeman, the official and the corporal, nor, let us say, in the form of a socialistic bureaucracy or a Labour Soviet. Its aim will be to diminish as soon and as far as possible the element of external compulsion in human life by awakening the inner divine compulsion of the Spirit within and all the preliminary means it will use will have that for its aim. In the end it will employ chiefly if not solely the spiritual compulsion which even the spiritual individual can exercise on those around him, – and how much more should a spiritual society be able to do it, – that which awakens within us in spite of all inner resistance and outer denial the compulsions of the Light, the desire and the power to grow through one's own nature into the Divine. For the perfectly spiritualised society will be one in which, as is dreamed by the spiritual anarchist, all men will be deeply free, and it will be so because the preliminary condition will have been satisfied. In that state each man will be not a law to himself, but *the* law, the divine Law, because he will be a soul living in the Divine and not an ego living mainly if not entirely for its own interest and purpose. His life will be led by the law of his own divine nature liberated from the ego.

Nor will that mean a breaking up of all human society into the isolated action of individuals; for the third word of the Spirit is unity. The spiritual life is the flower not of a featureless but a conscious and diversified oneness. Each man has to grow into the Divine within himself through his own individual being, therefore is a certain growing measure of freedom a necessity of the being as it develops and perfect freedom the sign and the condition of the perfect life. But also, the Divine whom he thus sees in himself, he sees equally in all others and as the same Spirit in all. Therefore too is a growing inner unity with others a necessity of his being and perfect unity the sign and condition of the perfect life. Not only to see and find the Divine in oneself, but to see and find the Divine in all, not only to seek one's own individual liberation or perfection, but to seek the liberation and perfection of others is the complete law of the spiritual being. If the divinity sought were a separate godhead within oneself and not the one Divine, or if one sought God for oneself alone, then indeed the result might be a grandiose egoism, the Olympian egoism of a Goethe or the Titanic egoism imagined by Nietzsche, or it might be the isolated self-knowledge or asceticism of the ivory tower or the Stylites pillar. But he who sees God in all, will serve freely God in all with the service of love. He will, that is to say, seek not only his own freedom, but the freedom of all, not only his own perfection, but the perfection of all. He will not feel his individuality perfect except in

the largest universality, nor his own life to be full life except as it is one with the universal life. He will not live either for himself or for the State and society, for the individual ego or the collective ego, but for something much greater, for God in himself and for the Divine in the universe.

The spiritual age will be ready to set in when the common mind of man begins to be alive to these truths and to be moved or desire to be moved by this triple or triune Spirit. That will mean the turning of the cycle of social development which we have been considering out of its incomplete repetitions on a new upward line towards its goal. For having set out, according to our supposition, with a symbolic age, an age in which man felt a great Reality behind all life which he sought through symbols, it will reach an age in which it will begin to live in that Reality, not through the symbol, not by the power of the type or of the convention or of the individual reason and intellectual will, but in our own highest nature which will be the nature of that Reality fulfilled in the conditions – not necessarily the same as now – of terrestrial existence. This is what the religions have seen with a more or less adequate intuition, but most often as in a glass darkly, that which they called the kingdom of God on earth, – his kingdom within in men's spirit and therefore, for the one is the material result of the effectivity of the other, his kingdom without in the life of the peoples.

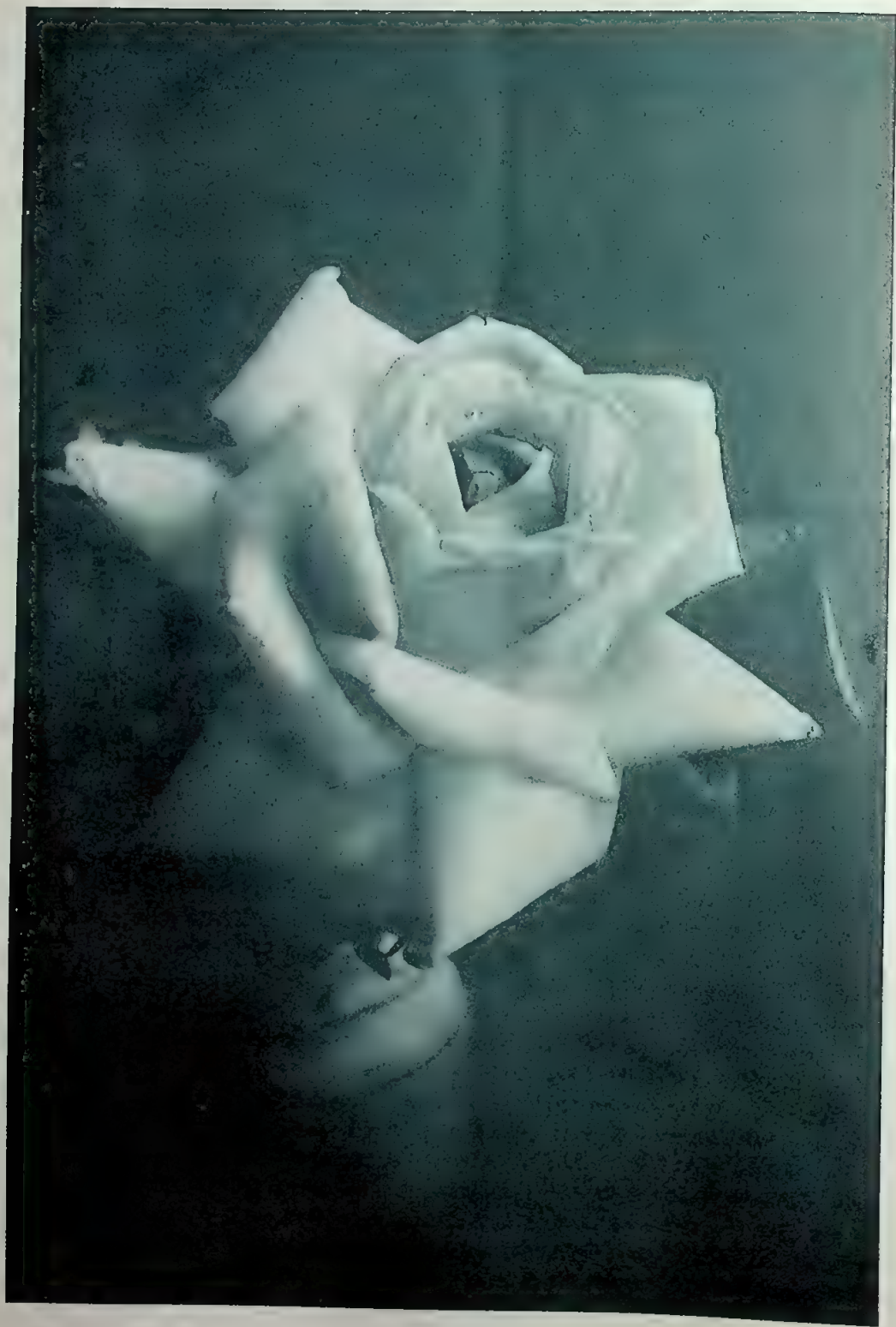


R E F E R E N C E S

(Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library Edition)

Page	Source		
		30	<i>The Synthesis of Yoga</i> , pp. 590-93, 596
1	<i>On Himself</i> , p. 97	33	<i>The Supramental Manifestation</i> , pp. 41-42
2	<i>The Life Divine</i> , p. 685	34	<i>Letters on Yoga</i> , pp. 114-15;
3	<i>On Himself</i> , pp. 95-97		<i>The Life Divine</i> , pp. 889-91;
5	<i>Essays on the Gita</i> , pp. 553-75		<i>Letters on Yoga</i> , pp. 1092-93;
22	<i>The Synthesis of Yoga</i> , pp. 583-88		<i>The Hour of God</i> , pp. 70, 70-72
27	<i>Sri Aurobindo Archives and Research</i> ,	39	Quote: <i>The Mother</i> , p. 65
	Dec. 1982, p. 197;	40	<i>Social and Political Thought</i> , pp. 231-45
	<i>Letters on Yoga</i> , pp. 98-101, 69-70, 70, 525;	47	<i>Collected Poems</i> , p. 584
	<i>The Mother</i> , pp. 6-7	48	<i>The Life Divine</i> , pp. 1059-60

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Rose of God

Rose of God, vermilion stain on the sapphires of heaven,
Rose of Bliss, fire-sweet, seven-tinged with the ecstasies seven!
Leap up in our heart of humanhood, O miracle, O flame,
Passion-flower of the Nameless, bud of the mystical Name.

Rose of God, great wisdom-bloom on the summits of being,
Rose of Light, immaculate core of the ultimate seeing!
Live in the mind of our earthhood; O golden Mystery, flower,
Sun on the head of the Timeless, guest of the marvellous Hour.

Rose of God, damask force of Infinite, red icon of might,
Rose of Power with thy diamond halo piercing the night!
Ablaze in the will of the mortal, design the wonder of thy plan,
Image of Immortality, outbreak of the Godhead in man.

Rose of God, smitten purple with the incarnate divine Desire,
Rose of Life, crowded with petals, colour's lyre!
Transform the body of the mortal like a sweet and magical rhyme;
Bridge our earthhood and heavenhood, make deathless the children of Time.

Rose of God, like a blush of rapture on Eternity's face,
Rose of Love, ruby depth of all being, fire-passion of Grace!
Arise from the heart of the yearning that sobs in Nature's abyss:
Make earth the home of the Wonderful and life beatitude's kiss.

Eric Arvidson

A Call

It is only the full emergence of the soul, the full descent of the native light and power of the Spirit and the consequent replacement or transformation and uplifting of our insufficient mental and vital nature by a spiritual and supramental Supernature that can effect this evolutionary miracle.

At first sight this insistence on a radical change of nature might seem to put off all the hope of humanity to a distant evolutionary future; for the transcendence of our normal human nature, a transcendence of our mental, vital and physical being, has the appearance of an endeavour too high and difficult and at present, for man as he is, impossible. Even if it were so, it would still remain the sole possibility for the transmutation of life; for to hope for a true change of human life without a change of human nature is an irrational and unspiritual proposition; it is to ask for something unnatural and unreal, an impossible miracle. But what is demanded by this change is not something altogether distant, alien to our existence and radically impossible; for what has to be developed is there in our being and not something outside it: what evolutionary Nature presses for, is an awakening to the knowledge of self, the discovery of self, the manifestation of the self and spirit within us and the release of its self-knowledge, its self-power, its native self-instrumentation. It is, besides, a step for which the whole of evolution has been a preparation and which is brought closer at each crisis of human destiny when the mental and vital evolution of the being touches a point where intellect and vital force reach some acme of tension and there is a need either for them to collapse, to sink back into a torpor of defeat or a repose of unprogressive quiescence or to rend their way through the veil against which they are straining. What is necessary is that there should be a turn in humanity felt by some or many towards the vision of this change, a feeling of its imperative need, the sense of its possibility, the will to make it possible in themselves and to find the way. That trend is not absent and it must increase with the tension of the crisis in human world-destiny; the need of an escape or a solution, the feeling that there is no other solution than the spiritual cannot but grow and become more imperative under the urgency of critical circumstance. To that call in the being there must always be some answer in the Divine Reality and in Nature.

Sri Aurobindo



"No danger can perturb my spirit's calm:
My acts are Thine; I do Thy works and pass;
Failure is cradled on Thy deathless arm,
Victory is Thy passage mirrored in Fortune's glass....

"No power can slay my soul; it lives in Thee.
Thy presence is my immortality."

(From Sri Aurobindo's Poem:
The Divine Worker)

Shri Guru Pershad passed away on the 13th of July, 1994.
He worked as the General Secretary of Sri Aurobindo Society
from November 1976 to February 1985. Our loving homage to him.

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